

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9746
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINR, US, BC
SUBJECT: BOTSWANA LABOR FEDERATION INCORPORATION

REF: GABORONE 738

SUMMARY: THE BOTSWANA LABOR FEDERATION WAS INAUGURATED ON
APRIL 2 UNITING FIVE OF THE COUNTRY'S TEN TRADE UNIONS.
TWO MORE ARE EXPECTED TO JOIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. WHILE NONE
OF THE ELECTED OFFICERS WILL BE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES, IT IS
EXPECTED THAT K. GABONEWE OF THE AALC-FUNDED BOTSWANA LABOR
EDUCATION CENTER MAY BE APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY
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OF THE FEDERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BOTSWANA LABOR FEDERATION (BLF) WAS INAUGURATED ON
APRIL 2 BY PRESIDENT KHAMA WHO ADDRESSED THE ASSEMBLED LABOR
DELEGATES AND MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS (INCLUDING
THE WIFE OF THE SOVIET CHARGE). AS REPORTED IN GABORONE 738
THE NEW FEDERATION HAS BEEN FORMED BY THE MINE WORKERS,

BANK EMPLOYEES, DIAMOND SORTERS, RAILWAY WORKERS AND GOVERNMENT MANUAL WORKERS UNIONS, WHO HAVE A COMBINED MEMBERSHIP OF APPROXIMATELY 9,000 OR 16 PERCENT OF THE REGULARLY PAID WORK FORCE IN BOTSWANA.

2. FRANK MZIZI, CHAIRMAN OF THE RAILWAY WORKERS UNION, HAS BEEN ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BLF. D. SALESHANDA, CHAIRMAN OF THE MINeworkERS UNION, IS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BLF. THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BLF IS EDWIN SETLHARI, WHO IS ALSO GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE RAILWAY WORKERS. P. TLHAODI, CHAIRMAN OF THE BANK EMPLOYEES UNION, HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BLF. THE TREASURER IS S.O. NTOBEDZI, WHO IS ALSO TREASURER OF THE RAILWAY WORKERS UNION.

3. THE GENERAL (OR EXECUTIVE) COUNCIL INCLUDES FOUR ELECTED MEMBERS: D. MAKGOSI (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT MANUAL WORKERS); U.G.S. MATLHABAPHIRI (GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE DIAMOND SORTERS); M. PHINDEL (ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BANK EMPLOYEES UNION); AND JUSTICE NTWADGAE (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE MINeworkERS); PLUS THE CHAIRMEN AND GENERAL SECRETARIES OF EACH OF THE CONSTITUENT UNIONS. IN THE CASE WHERE A CHAIRMAN OR GENERAL SECRETARY OF A CONSTITUENT UNION HAS BEEN ELECTED TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL, HIS UNION HAS THE RIGHT TO NOMINATE AN ALTERNATE.

4. NONE OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED OFFICERS OF THE FEDERATION WILL BE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES. ALTHOUGH A FINAL DECISION HAS APPARENTLY NOT BEEN TAKEN, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE FEDERATION WILL APPOINT A FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND AN EDUCATION SECRETARY WHO WILL CONTINUE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AALC-FUNDED BOTSWANA LABOR EDUCATION CENTER (BLEC). JOHN PRICE OF THE BOTSWANA EMPLOYERS FEDERATION AND SOURCES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR INDICATED TO THE VISITING REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER THEY BELIEVE K. GABONEWE OF THE BLEC MAY BE APPOINTED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY POSITION.

5. BOTH GABONEWE AND THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY, EDWIN SETLHARI, ARE GRADUATES OF THE HARVARD TRAINING CENTER. GABONEWE ALSO ATTENDED CORNELL UNDER USG AUSPICES AND ACCORDING TO KLAUS HELFER OF THE FREDRIECH EBERT FOUNDATION VISITED THE USSR IN 1972. IF GABONEWE BECOMES ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, HE IS EXPECTED TO BE A VIGOROUS ADVOCATE OF STRONG TRADE UNIONISM. HE SUFFERS, HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO HELFER, FROM TOO CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH AALC, WHICH HAS BEEN PAYING HIS SALARY. ALTHOUGH HELFER BELIEVES THERE IS MUCH BOTH HIS ORGANIZATION AND THE AALC CAN LEGITIMATELY DO TO ENCOURAGE THE NEW FEDERATION, HE BELIEVES BOTH ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD AVOID CASH GRANTS OR SALARY SUBSIDIES. HE HAS

ALREADY REFUSED A REQUEST FROM THE BLF TO SUBSIDIZE THE SALARY
THE SALARY OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY. THERE IS A VIEW WITHIN

THE BLF ITSELF THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TOWARD SELF-
RELIANCE. AS VICE CHAIRMAN SOLESHANDA TOLD THE ASSEMBLED
AUDIENCE ON APRIL 2, "WHOEVER PAYS THE PIPER CALLS THE TUNE".

6. COMMENT: PRESIDENT KHAMA WAS OBVIOUSLY RATIFIED TO EE

THE BLF FINALLY ESTABLISHED SIX YEARS AFTER HE FIRST URGED
SUCH A FORMATION. AS HE POINTED OUT IN HIS ADDRESS, IT WILL
ENABLE VARIOUS TRIPARTITE (GOVERNMENT-EMPLOYER-LABOR) ENTITIES
TO FUNCTION AS THEY WERE INTENDED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE
NEXT UNION TO VOTE ON JOINING THE BLF WILL BE THE MEAT
INDUSTRY WORKERS AND THEN POSSIBLY THE COMMERCIAL AND
GENERAL WORKERS (GABONEWE'S UNION). THE DOMINANCE OF THE
RAILWAY WORKERS IN THE BLF EXECUTIVE IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY
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EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THEY ARE THE OLDEST AND BEST ORGAN-
IZED OF BOTSWANA'S UNIONS.
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